

LETTER

FROM

A Member of Parliament

To his Friend in the Country.

Giving a short Account of the Proceedings of the TACKERS, upon the Occasional and Self-denying Bills; the Act of Security in Scotland, and other Occurrences in the last Session of Parliament.

The Fourth Edition.

S I R,

I Received yours, and in obedience to your Commands have sent you a short Account of the several Debates in the House of Commons upon the Bills and other Matters mentioned in your Letter.

The Speaker having Reported the Queen's most Gracious Speech from the Throne; the E. of Dy—t, a Person of great Integrity and Zeal for his Country, made a very Loyal Speech, and concluded with a Motion for an humble Address to be made to Her Majesty, which you have seen in Print: This Motion was Seconded, amongst others, by Mr. Br—y who desired that Assurance might be given of all possible Dispatch to the necessary Supplies. Sir H. M. made a short Speech in praise of Her Majesty, and of the Glorious Successes the last Summer, and concurring in the other Parts of the Address, *did also hope they should have an opportunity this Session, to maintain the Legal Prerogatives of the Crown, and the Rights and Liberties of the People.*

The House having appointed a Day to consider of Her Majesty's Speech: Sir H. M. made a Motion, *That a Supply be granted to Her Majesty for the carrying on a vigorous War against France and Spain.*

This extraordinary Zeal of the Country Gentlemen for Dispatch of the publick Supplies, was particularly taken notice of in the House: And the Truth was, that as Gentlemen saw a necessity of carrying on the War with Vigour on one side, so on the other, they apprehended there was no way to secure the Establish'd Government, and to put an end to the Contention in the Kingdom, but by passing the Occasional Bill; and there was no way to pass that Bill, but by Consolidating the same with the Land Tax; and therefore, that they might do it with safety every way, whether it passed the Lords or not, they gave the greater dispatch to the Publick Aids, that in case the Lords should reject the Tack, they might, upon a short Prorogation, renew and pass the Money-Bill within the usual time; but this was not declared lest the Lords should from thence be the more encouraged to reject the Bill.

And to demonstrate that these Gentlemen had no other design, the E. of Dy—t was the Person that first moved for referring the Occasional Bill to the same Committee, to whom the Land-Tax was referred, in order to join them both together; which this Noble Lord would never have condescended to do, but that he knew no evil Consequences could possibly happen, altho' the Bill should have been rejected by the Lords.

In the Debate on this occasion, some Gentlemen argued against the Right of Tacking, or joining two Bills together: Others agreed to a Right of Tacking, but not against the Lords: The Antient Members on that side agreed that the Commons had a Right to Tack on Extraordinary Occasions, but did not think it seasonable at this time: And upon this Topick, Gentlemen had a fair Opportunity of shewing their Eloquence, and of magnifying the Danger and Inconveniences that would arise in case the Lords should not think fit to pass the Bill.

On the other side it was argued, that the Commons had the Right of giving Money, not only for securing their Properties from Arbitrary Taxes; but also for purchasing and obtaining good and wholsom Laws for the Welfare of the Publick, and that in all Ages they had made use of that Privilege for such Purposes.

That in Antient Parliaments the Commons did generally insist on having good Laws, and on Redress of Grievances, before

they would give any Money at all; and in process of time, when the Exigencies of Affairs required Dispatch of the Supplies, or the Prince grew jealous, that the Commons, after passing one, might insist on more Bills, before they would give any Money; the Commons for the mutual Satisfaction of the Prince and People, sent up their Money and their Grievances together, which is now call'd Tacking. This was no Encroachment, but rather an Expedient found out on extraordinary Occasions for the Safety and Satisfaction of the whole Legislature.

And to those that distinguish'd between Tacking against the Crown, and Tacking against the Lords, they readily reply'd, that the Lords being the Creatures of the Crown, they made a Distinction without any great Difference. No such Tack could ever come to the Crown, but thro' the House of Peers. Every Tack that had been made in former Times, whereof there were some almost in every Reign, were Tacks against the Lords, as well as against the Crown. Tho' they were not to the prejudice of either, as plainly appears, but only to preserve the publick Safety.

The plain Meaning of this Terrible Odious thing, call'd Tacking; (for every thing is odious to the Ignorant, that hath not Success) was no more but this: The Commons give Money for the Good of the People, to defend our Excellent Constitution and Establish'd Government against all its Enemies both at home and abroad; and therefore they desired that the End and the Means might be joined together in the same Bill. As for instance, in the case before us; The Commons gave Money, to the end that the Civil Officers, who are to take care of them at home, might be conformable to the Establish'd Government, and that the Military Officers and Soldiers, who are to fight for them abroad, might be well paid: Why may not these things be coupl'd together in the same Act? Is the End foreign to the Thing that is granted for that End? How many Aids have been granted to the Crown on certain Conditions? If the Lords or the Prince do not like the Terms, they may reject the Bill; but it is as much the Right of the Commons to grant on Condition, as it is the Right of the Lords to reject, if they see cause. See the Abridgment of Cotton's Records.

The Commons do generally desire to send up single Bills, because they may have the Concurrence of the Lords in the Amendments of them, which when joined to a Money Bill, they are deprived of, but this doth as much concern the Commons as the Lords; for if the Commons think fit to Tack a Bill to an Aid, they run the hazard of losing that Bill, which if sent up by it self, might have been obtained with a Reasonable Amendment; and therefore they never do Tack, but on an Extraordinary Occasion as this was, after a Bill has been well considered, often rejected by the other House, and was of great Importance to the Peace and Welfare of the Nation.

And it is the usage in the House of Commons, after a Bill is Read a Third Time and passed, then to give it the same or a new Title, and if this Bill had been then Entitled, as it might have been; *An Act for granting an Aid to Her Majesty, for the better Security of the Establish'd Government in Church and State*, both Parts of the Bill had been proper to the Title, and there being nothing in the Bill Foreign to the same, there had been no Tack at all.

And thus the Tack is Justified and Avoided at the same Time; for if it be taken as a Tack, they had a right so to do, and a reasonable Cause to attempt it, without any Danger; but this

was

was in a Case of such a Nature, that One Title would properly comprehend both Bills; so that all the great Clamour about a Tack, which maketh such a Noise in the World, proveth to be but a Squib, Powder without Shot, that giveth a Crack, but vanisheth into Air and doth no Execution.

All the Arguments against Tacking, were equally strong against the Lords rejecting the Bill when Tacked; and the Commons could never believe the Lords would expose the Nation to all the Dangers, that were supposed; rather than to pass so Reasonable a Bill, for the Security of the Church.

And here it may not be improper to observe, that the Commons shew'd so great a Temper in this Matter, in hopes of putting an end to this Controversie, that they sent up the Bill in a manner as the Lords had passed it before, and brought in a Clause to Ease the Dissenters of Offices of Burthen; so that in Truth, if the Dissenters do not design to Destroy our Church, and Establish their own, they ought to have Petitioned, (as they formerly declar'd they would, on the Addition of such a Clause,) for the passing of that Bill in the House of Lords, as it was then pass'd through the House of Commons.

A Worthy Member of the other side was pleas'd to declare, That he admir'd to see any Gentlemen, that had been always zealous for that Bill, speak against the Tack, since there was no other way to obtain the Bill. For his part, he had always been against the Bill, and therefore was against the joining of it to a Publick Aid; but in case he had been of an Opinion for the Bill, he should have readily joined with those that were for consolidating the same with the Land-Tax; since there is no doubt but the Commons have a Right to Tack, by annexing such Conditions to the Grant of Money, as they shall think necessary for the Publick Safety.

I shall not trouble you at present with the History of Tacking, of which the Journals of the House will furnish you with innumerable Instances; but pray Sir Recollect your self, were not you a Member of Parliament in the last Reign? And were not you a Tacker in that Glorious Reign? Were not the Irish Forfeitures Tacked to a Money Bill? Were not the Commissioners of the Excise Tacked to a Money Bill? And after that the Commissioners of the Customs, to make them incapable to sit in Parliament? Was not the Bill of Accounts Tacked to a Money Bill? And were not all these Tacks made by the very same Party that now cry out against Tacking; what is the meaning of all this? For my Part I dread to guess at it, and shall pass over this Affair and proceed to give a short Account of the Debate upon the Scotch Affairs; in which the Tackers will appear to have been the most zealous Advocates for the House of Hanover, and the Act of Succession.

A Day being appointed to take that Matter into Consideration, it was Unanimously agreed, that the passing the Act of Security in Scotland was of dangerous Consequence, to the Peace and Welfare of this Nation: But these Jacobite Tackers (who are indeed honest Country Gentlemen, that are not in any Offices or Places, but zealous for the Good of those by whom they are intrusted) these High Flyers were so unreasonable as to propose, that the passing that Act did tend to Defeat the Succession of the Crown in the illustrious House of Hanover; and what else could it tend to? The Scotch positively refuse to Establish the same Successor as England, unless they have those Things granted, which cannot be done without Ruin to this Nation; they are under the greatest Resentments imaginable, and when the only Thing left to reduce them to the Act of Succession, was the Power of England, what then? to make that Argument more prevailing, they are ordered to be Armed and Disciplined every Month: Is this the way to preserve the Succession? and yet upon a Division in the House, there was 139 against it; the Tackers were out Voted, and when the Question was over, and the Tackers and Anti-Tackers came to converse together; it was confessed that the Reason that induced them to oppose that Question, was, because they were informed, that in Case it had been carried, these Tackers had intended to have Moved for an Address to the Queen, to desire the Princess Sophia to reside in England.

So that these Tackers are Monstrous sort of Creatures, for they are Hanoverians within Doors, and Jacobites without.

But now let us see how the Tackers behaved themselves when a Motion was made to Arm the People in England, as well as in Scotland? Did these Tackers Promote or Encourage that Motion? No, they declared against it, they were for preserving the Peace and Quiet of the Kingdom; they did not think it was a proper Time to Arm the People, when there were such Unhappy Feuds and Animosities in the Kingdom; they were for preserving the Power of the Sword in the Crown, as it is wisely Established by the Acts of Militia, and thereby Securing us from the Danger of Popular and Tumultuous Assemblies, and in the Consequence thereof, from Destroying the Monarchy, and the Act of Succession; They considered where the Arms are placed, there will be the Power, and where the Power is, there will be

the Government; and they were not for doing the same thing in England, which they have condemned in Scotland.

And are not these Tackers strange sort of Men? that while they are accused of Tacking against, are really shewing their utmost Zeal in defence of the Crown: But it is to be feared, that it will too soon appear, that these Tackers have been endeavouring to save those that will not be saved, till it is out of the Power of Man; and we have no reason now to expect Miracles.

On Objection is started against these Tackers, that they are playing a cunning Game, and all their Design is to advance themselves, and get into Places; but how is this consistent with the late Bills to lessen the great Number of Publick Officers in Parliament; which were first moved by them, and prosecuted with all the Zeal Imaginable. These are Instances one would think, should demonstrate to all Mankind who these Tackers are? Men of Honour, Principles, and Estates; Men that have no other Aim or End, but the Peace and Quiet, the Prosperity and Happiness of their Native Country; Men that remember the late Alterations, Distractions, and Civil Wars; are desirous to fortify the Constitution, and preserve us from Anarchy, and a Presbyterian Establishment; Men that hate Persecution more than their Enemies; and are not endeavouring to bring it on others, but to keep it from themselves; and in order to that, I must farther acquaint you, that they have added a Clause to the Scotch-Bill, that the Commissioners should not have Power to treat with Scotland about any Alteration in the Doctrine or Discipline of the Established Church.

And here I need not tell you what Care they have taken to preserve the Rights and Liberties of all the Commons of England, since that will sufficiently appear, by the Printed Report of the Conferences between the Two Houses; neither will I trouble you with any Account of the Bill for the Relief, Employment, and Settlement of the Poor, since the same is coming forth in Print, and will best speak for it self, and for these Tackers, who have taken so much Pains for the Good of their Country.

And now, how comes it to pass, that these Tackers take so much Care of The Succession of the Crown in the illustrious House of Hanover, of the Monarchy, the Church, the Religion and the Rights of their Country? Are these the Signs of their being Jacobites? or is it true, that the Game in Forty One is beginning again? and all that will not act a part in that dark and dismal Tragedy, are to be branded with the Names of Papists, Jacobites, Perkenites, and what else they please.

But there are none so blind as they that will not see; is there not a Storm gathering in the North? Does it not portend ill to England? Did not the solemn League and Covenant, arise from thence? Is not Episcopacy and Prelacy declared in Scotland to be an unsupportable Grievance? Have they not made it High-Treason to Speak or Write for Episcopacy in the Church? And do you think they will not do the same thing in England, if they prevail? And what can hinder them, if their Brethren in England Joyn with them? How soon are the best Governments in the World overturned by a sudden Conjunction? And when is the proper time for such a Revolution, but when Men seem to be Infatuated, and lulled asleep with fair Pretences, and Specious Representations.

As to what you mention of the Ballads, Lists and Libels, against the Tackers, I am perswaded that those things will turn to their Honour and Advantage, for such Malitious and Vile Proceedings, do never convince Men against their own Knowledge and long Experience, and against Gentlemen of ancient Families, and known Zeal and Integrity, for the common Good of their Sovereign and their Country.

As to my Friend, mentioned in your Letter, he does freely own himself to be one of those whom the Enemies to England call Tackers, one that was for joining the Security of the Church and State in the same Bill, One that was for Preserving the present Establishment, and (by removing Fears and Jealousies on both sides) for restoring the great and inestimable Blessing of Peace and Union.

He cannot but glory in this particular, and believe that it will be remembered by Posterity for the Honour of his Family: that no Temptations of Honour or Preferment, no Hopes nor Fears, have prevailed upon him to desert the Cause of God or Religion, his Prince or his Country.

I shall conclude this Letter with a hearty Prayer to Almighty God to Bless her Majesty with a long and prosperous Reign over us; with Peace at Home, and Victory abroad; with faithful Counsellors, and Unbysed Patriots.

And in order to our future Happiness, That the Dissenters may be contented with the Act of Toleration, the Establish'd Church be securely Settled to all Posterity; and that the People of England may not want these Honest Tackers to represent them in the ensuing Parliament.

F I N I S.